

Message Text

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15

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0547

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: AN AFM OFFICER DISCUSSES ANGOLA'S FUTURE

1. A CONGEN OFFICER MET WITH COMMANDANTE MARTINS E SILVA, INFORMATION OFFICER AND AFM MEMBER, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TWO WEEKS IN PORTUGAL. MARTINS GAVE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OPTIONS OPEN TO PORTUGAL IN RESOLVING THE POLITICAL/MILITARY IMPASSE IN ANGOLA, AND SOME BACKGROUND ON THE PRESENT SITUATION.

2. MARTINS WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE ABILITY OF PORTUGAL TO AVOID CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA. THE THRUST OF WHAT HE SAID CONSTITUTES A DEFENSIBLE PUBLIC POSTURE THAT WILL PERMIT THE LISBON REGIME EVENTUALLY TO WASH ITS HANDS OF THE COMING CHAOS. HE SAID ALL SIDES AGREED ON THE NEED FOR A NEW SUMMIT CONFERENCE TO REWRITE THE ALVOR ACCORD. AT THIS CONFERENCE THE PORTUGUESE WOULD URGE THE FORMATION OF A TRULY UNITARY
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ANGOLAN ARMY AND THE SCRAPPING OF ALL SEPARATE LIBERATION

GROUP MILITARY FORCES. THIS WOULD BE THE SINE QUE NON FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIFIED ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT. ELECTIONS WOULD PROBABLY BE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED AND THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE WOULD NOT DEPEND UPON THEM. IF PROPOSED AND SUPPORTED BY ALL LIBERATION GROUPS, PORTUGAL WOULD CONSIDER DELAYING THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE TO GIVE THE ANGOLANS MORE TIME TO PEACEFULLY SORT OUT THEIR POLITICAL DIFFERENCES.

3. THE PORTUGUESE ARE NOT DELUDING THEMSELVES ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF FORMING A UNIFIED ARMY, BUT THEY REALIZE THERE CAN BE NO PEACE IN ANGOLA UNTIL THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED. THEY HAVE ALREADY SOUNDED OUT THE THREE GROUPS ON THE QUESTION OF A UNITARY ARMY AND MARTINS SAID UNITA WAS AGREEABLE, MPLA WOULD STUDY THE MATTER AND FNLA REJECTED IT. THE PORTUGUESE REALIZE THAT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER IT IS PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE TO FORGE A UNIFIED FORCE FROM THE THREE WARRING PARTIES, BUT THEY FEEL THE EFFORT MUST BE AT LEAST MADE. IF IT FAILS, THE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WAR FALLS UPON THE MOVEMENTS, NOT LISBON. HE ADDED THAT PORTUGAL WOULD BE ABLE TO JUSTIFY ITSELF TO ANGOLANS AND TO THE WORLD ONLY IF IT DID ALL IT COULD TO AVERT WAR. MARTINS SAID THE PORTUGUESE DO NOT NOW PLAN TO ASK THE UN TO INTERVENE. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, INCLUDED UN ACTION IN THEIR CONTINGENCY PLANS.

4. TO FURTHER BUTTRESS THEIR CASE MARTIN'S IMPLIED THAT LISBON HAS OR WOULD APPROACH THE MAIN BACKERS OF THE LIBERATION ARMIES (PRESUMABLY THE USSR AND ZAIRE) TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE ON THEIR CLIENTS TO ACCEPT PORTUGAL'S PROPOSALS.

5. TURNING TO THE CURRENT SITUATION, HE SAID IT APPEARED FNLA SUFFERED A TACTICAL DEFEAT IN THE RECENT FIGHTING. IT WAS FORCED TO ABANDON MANY OF ITS GARRISONS IN THE CITY'S LARGEST GHETTO, CAZENGA, IN THE FACE OF ATTACKS BY MPLA TROOPS AND IRREGULARS. FNLA HAS NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY IN REGULAR FORCES IN LUANDA BUT THE BLACKS IN MOST OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS ARE SOLIDLY MPLA AND ARE WELL ARMED. MARTINS ATTRIBUTED FNLA'S DEFEAT TO ITS OPERATION IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT. HE MENTIONED THAT IN RETALIATION FNLA HAS LAUNCHED ATTACKS AGAINST MPLA DELEGATIONS IN THE NORTH OF ANGOLA. FIGHTING HAS BEEN REPORTED IN SAO SALVADOR, AMBRIZ AND TAMBOCO, WITH AT

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LEAST 15 KILLED SO FAR. THE FIGHTING WAS CONTINUING ON MAY 6.

6. MARTINS WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED OVER THE UNEXPECTED RACIAL OVERTONES OF THE RECENT LUANDA FIGHTING. HE SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE AUGUST, 1974 WHITES WERE ATTACKED AND KILLED AND HE FEARED AN OUTBREAK OF BLACK-WHITE VIOLENCE THAT WOULD CAUSE A WHITE MIGRATION TO PORTUGAL, AN EVENTUALITY THE AFM WANTS TO AVOID AT ALL COSTS. HE SAID PORTUGUESE TROOPS WOULD

BE MORE AGGRESSIVE IN THE FUTURE IN PROTECTING WHITES. HE
CONFIRMED TWO INSTANCES WHERE PORTUGUESE TROOPS HAD OPENED FIRE
ON MPLA TROOPS AND IRREGULARS WHO WERE ATTACKING WHITES.

7. MARTINS, SPEAKING AS AN AFM LEADER IN ANGOLA, EXPRESSED
SATISFACTION WITH THE ELECTION RESULTS IN PORTUGAL. HE SAID THIS
PROVED THE COMMUNISTS WERE NOT ABOUT TO TAKE OVER. HE
EXPRESSED DISGUST WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS FOR THEIR LACK
OF SUPPORT FOR PORTUGAL AND THEIR CONSTANT CRITICISM OF THE AFM,
A CRITICISM HE FELT WAS UNJUST AND DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE
DIFFICULT TASKS CONFRONTING THE AFM. HE ADMITTED THEIR POSITION
WAS SOCIALIST, BUT SAID THIS WAS NECESSARY TO REMOVE INEQUITABLE
CONDITIONS IN PORTUGAL CAUSED BY THE OLD REGIME. QUESTIONED
ON THE AFM'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S., HE WAS MORE DIPLOMATIC
AND DID NOT CONDEMN US AS HE HAD THE EUROPEANS. HE CANNOT UNDER-
STAND, HOWEVER, OUR PREOCCUPATION WITH A COMMUNIST MENACE; TO THE
AFM, HE SAID, THE COMMUNISTS ARE ONLY ONE PARTY AND THEY DESERVE
RECOGNITION IN THE GOVERNMENT.
KILLORAN

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